



EU External Action Service: praise and blame one year on

Committees: Committee on Foreign Affairs

One year on, the European External Action Service (EEAS) is not delivering the kind of leadership that EU foreign policy needs, said some MEPs at a Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Wednesday. Others countered that it had nonetheless dealt successfully with many cases.

"Although the creation of the EEAS was positive, we do not sense the kind of leadership that we want to see from EEAS - it lacks ambition", said Ana Gomes (S&D, PT), urging it to "push Member States into action".

"Member States are more divided now than before the Lisbon Treaty," said Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D, FI).

There is no common EU policy. It is all a myth", said Robert Atkins (ECR, UK).

Several MEPs pointed out that only four EU Member States had taken part in the Odyssey operation in Libya.

By contrast, Annemie Neyets-Uytterbroeck (ALDE, BE), praised foreign policy High Representative Catherine Ashton, not only for building the new service, "against all the odds" in just a year, but also for "dealing successfully with many cases, such as Libya".

Ulrike Lunacek, (Greens/EFA, AT), agreed that "Despite the problems and the obstacles, the EEAS has done a successful job and now is now the sixth biggest service for foreign affairs in the world". She nonetheless felt that more women should be appointed to senior posts in the service.

"If we look at what happened during the Arab Spring, we can see the EU's role in spreading values. The EU is a bridge between different countries and cultures", said EEAS Executive Secretary General Pierre Vimont, observing that the biggest challenge facing the EEAS is achieving a "comprehensive approach and an integrated dialogue".

Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Elmar Brok (EPP, DE), stressed that the EU is a global player. As one of the world's leading exporters and innovators, "it has no big problems with relevance" he said.

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